



Kay Ivey
Governor



Graham L. Sisson, Jr.
Executive Director

State of Alabama Governor's Office on Disability FY 2021



It's All GOOD



Table of Contents

The Honorable Governor Kay Ivey.....3
Dr. Graham L. Sisson, Jr., Executive Director 4
Overview & Strategic Plan 5
Goals and Accomplishments, Fiscal, and SMART Budget, Partnerships 6, 7, 8, & 9



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**The Honorable
Kay Ivey
Governor
State of Alabama**



KAY IVEY, GOVERNOR
STATE OF ALABAMA

The work contained in this annual report shows how the Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD) is successfully helping the more than 776,991 people in Alabama living with a disability (Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2020). I rely on GOOD to provide reliable and helpful information on disability resources and the unmet needs of affected Alabamians. My administration is committed to increasing opportunities for people with disabilities in Alabama as well as increasing employment opportunities through the Governor's Job Fair for People with Disabilities. GOOD is an excellent resource. If you need assistance with disability-related issues, please do not hesitate to contact the Governor's Office on Disability.

Kay Ivey



Dr. Graham L. Sisson, Jr. and Governor Kay Ivey

Dr. Graham L. Sisson, Jr., Executive Director

Graham was appointed as Executive Director of the Governor's Office on Disability in October 2007 and was reappointed in January 2011. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of North Alabama in Accounting in 1987. Graham also attended Vanderbilt University and was awarded his Juris Doctorate in 1990. He was admitted to the Alabama State Bar in 1990. He received a certificate in Rehabilitation Leadership and Management from Auburn University in May, 2009. Graham served as an adjunct law professor teaching a disability law course at the Birmingham School of Law and taught a doctoral course in disability law and history at Auburn University. Graham is a 2016 graduate of Auburn University with a PhD in Rehabilitation, Counseling, and Leadership. He has lived with a disability since 1982.

Letter from Dr. Sisson

I would like to thank the Governor and the Alabama Legislature for their continuing support of GOOD.

Fiscal Year 2021 has been another year of positive growth and change for the office. GOOD continues to maintain nine local advisory committees around the state which provide grassroots input about unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities and increases the visibility of the office. GOOD partners with these local advisory groups to facilitate the GOOD mission statement and strategic plan and obtain information at the grassroots level. GOOD will continue to monitor the unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities as related to the COVID 19 pandemic.

The GOOD website has been revised to be even more user-friendly and includes additional resources.

GOOD is still available to do training, accessibility surveying, and speaking at meetings or seminars at no cost. To schedule training, speaking engagements, or surveying, call GOOD's Toll Free Number at 888-879-3582. Meetings continue to be held with other state agencies to foster collaboration and maximize state resources for people with disabilities. A special thanks is again given to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services for its close partnership with GOOD.

Information about disability issues and training continues to be disseminated throughout the state. Awareness is a powerful tool which leads to greater access for individuals with disabilities. GOOD continues its role of dispensing accurate information. Join the GOOD list by accessing the appropriate icon on GOOD's website at www.good.alabama.gov.

GOOD's Toll-Free Number is 888-879-3582 for consumers or anyone interested in information, referrals, and resources for people with disabilities in Alabama.

We look forward to the progression and inclusion of Alabamians with disabilities in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Dr. Graham L. Sisson, Jr.

GOOD Overview

The Governor's Office on Disability was created by Executive Order Number 43 in 1999. It was formed to serve as a statewide clearing house for information on disability and resources in Alabama. Its other major function is to act as a liaison to the Governor's Office on disability issues.

The Governor's Office on Disability's mission statement was revised in 2008 as follows:

“Facilitate the inclusion of Alabamians with disabilities in education, employment, housing, transportation, healthcare, and leisure.”

Executive Order 15 in 2011 re-established the Governor's Office on Disability under the new administration. Because resources are scarce in Alabama, the Governor's Office on Disability seeks to maximize disability resources by identifying existing ones and fostering collaboration among public and private entities that serve people with disabilities.

The Governor's Office on Disability actively seeks to engage communication between individuals with disabilities and their families and entities that provide services to them. GOOD's website, www.good.alabama.gov, is one tool that is being expanded to facilitate open dialogue and access on disability resources and issues. To foster communication even more, GOOD developed a list serve. Anyone interested in issues affecting people with disabilities can join the GOOD list by accessing the website at www.good.alabama.gov, clicking the “Join the GOOD List” icon and entering in personal contact and email information. Periodically, cutting edge information on disability will be shared with list members.

Strategic Plan

(1) Legislation Initiative

Monitor Alabama's disability related legislation and policies and provide policy analysis to the Governor.

Objective 1: Monitor constituent issues with regard to policy formulation and recommendations for legislation.

Objective 2: Serve as a liaison to the Governor on all necessary matters of interest related to the GOOD mission.

(2) Collaboration Initiative

Establish a united voice to determine and meet the needs of the GOOD mission.

Objective 1: Utilize local advisory committees to determine the unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities.

Objective 2: Partner with public and private entities, inclusive of state agencies, that advance the achievement of the GOOD mission.

Objective 3: To accept and resolve referrals regarding disability issues from the Governor's Constituent Affairs Office and other referral resources.

(3) Consultation Initiative

Serve as advisor on public disability-related issues in Alabama.

Objective 1: Provide informal legal opinions on disability issues to the Governor's Legal Office.

Objective 2: Provide analytical information to the Governor's Legal Office relative to the GOOD mission.

Objective 3: Act as an expert resource regarding the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and related laws.

(4) Dissemination Initiative

Promote public awareness of actions and activities in fulfilling GOOD's mission.

Objective 1: Increase effective utilization of available resources for Alabamians with disabilities.

Objective 2: Establish a website as the primary dissemination method of GOOD actions, activities and publications.

Objective 3: Promote local and/or statewide media coverage of GOOD's actions and activities when possible.

Governor's Office on Disability

Goals and Accomplishments for FY 2021

I. Disability Recognition, Summits, Conferences, and Job Fairs

- GOOD attended the United Ability Disability Hiring Expo on 9/23/21 at the United Ability campus. There were approximately 20 businesses and local community providers and their clients. Dr. Graham Sisson provided opening remarks and is pictured on page 7.

II. Convening Disability Consumer Advisory Councils

- 9 Regional Council Meetings held twice during each fiscal year

III. Trainings/Disability Awareness

ADA

- In collaboration with the Alabama's ADA toll free information services conducted in FY 2021:
 - ◆ 19 ADA Trainings
 - ◆ 17 Accessibility Reviews/Consultations

IV. Information and Referral

- Number of inquiries on disability issues FY 2021
 - ◆ 925 inquiries

V. Website

- Continuously updating website, resources, and corresponding with members on the GOOD list.

VI. Legislation Initiative

- GOOD continued to work on legislation to address unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities.
 - ◆ GOOD worked on **Act No. 2021-519** - Schools, public, Seizure Safe Schools Act, students with seizure disorders, admin. of medication by school personnel procedures, Secs. 16-30C-1 to 16-30C-6, inclusive, added.
 - ◆ GOOD tracked **Act No. 2021-444** - Colleges, state four-year, veterans, children of deceased and disabled veterans, comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for children of disabled veterans with intellectual disabilities, tuition reimbursement provided for, Sec. 31-6-2.1 added; Secs. 31-6-2 am'd.

VII. FAND—Functional and Access Needs in Disasters Task Force

- GOOD took a leadership role in this statewide taskforce in 2013 and continued through 2021. Originally named the Special Populations Taskforce, it was renamed Functional and Access Needs in Disaster to accurately reflect its purpose of ensuring Alabamians with functional and accessible needs are not only considered, but included in all phases of emergency management. Dr. Sisson chairs this group and continues to serve as liaison between FAND and the Governor's Mass Care and Sheltering Taskforce. Those interested in joining this effort should contact Dr. Sisson at 800-441-7607 extension 7189.

FY 2021 Budget

Personnel Costs	\$53,356
Employee Benefits	\$22,780
Travel-in-State	\$105
Travel Out-of-State	0
Repairs & Maintenance	\$1,110
Rentals & Leases	0
Utilities & Communications	\$104
Professional Services	\$1,819
Supplies, Materials & Operating Expenses	\$1,809
Grants & Benefits	\$23,400
Other Equipment Purchases	2,158
Total	\$106,631

FY 2021 Smart Budget

Number of Inquiries—Projected 800, Actual 925

Number responded to within 72 hours—Projected 100%, Actual 100%

Governor's Office on Disability

Goals and Accomplishments for FY 2021

- **Hiring Expo - United Ability - 9/23/21—Dr. Graham Sisson provides welcoming remarks**



Pictured left to right: Employee of Buffalo Rock , Secretary Fitzgerald Washington (ADOL), Dr. Graham Sisson (GOOD)

“The rate of unemployment for individuals with significant disabilities is unacceptably high. Without full employment, these individuals cannot achieve the American dream. People with disabilities are a largely untapped part of the labor force that must be utilized to meet today’s workforce shortages.

I applaud United Ability and all of its partners for sponsoring the disability hiring expo to meet the need of employment for individuals with disabilities.”

- Dr. Graham Sisson

- **ALEA / GOOD planning meeting for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sensitivity Training - 9/7/21**



Pictured left to right: Deputy Secretary John Hamm (ALEA), Colonel Jimmy Helms (ALEA), Secretary Hal Taylor (ALEA), Dr. Graham Sisson (GOOD) Michael Duel (AIDB), Beth Overland (ADRS), Fred Miller (AIDB)

- **UPS - 5/6/21—Dr. Graham Sisson provides welcoming remarks**



UPS partnered with Down Syndrome of Alabama and provided them a \$25,000 grant to establish a scholarship fund in Jake Pratt's name (pictured above). It was announced at this event that Jake was welcomed back as a permanent employee of UPS.

Governor's Office on Disability

Partnerships

VIII. Partnerships

Amarex Corporation	Birmingham Committee on ADA
Alabama Association of Regional Councils Conference	Blind Advisory Committee
Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities	Brewton Career Center
Alabama Community College Association	Calhoun Community College
Alabama Counseling Association	Camp ASCCA
Alabama Department of Corrections	Camp McDowell, Jasper
Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources	Central Alabama Community College
Alabama Department of Public Health	Cheaha State Park
Alabama Department of Human Resources	Child Care Resources, Inc.
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services	City of Auburn
Alabama Disability Advocacy Program	City of Gulf Shores
Alabama Easter Seals	City of Hamilton
Alabama Emergency Management Agency	City of Huntsville
Alabama Fire College Medical Needs Shelter	Cullman Career Center
Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund	Dallas County EMA
Alabama Governor's Office	Deaf/Blind Coalition
Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum	Demopolis Career Center
Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council	Dothan Career Center
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind	Disabilities Rights & Resources
Alabama Legislature	Disability Resource Network
Alabama Lifespan Respite Coalition	Family Voices of Alabama
Alabama Multiagency Feeding Plan	Flagg Mountain Trail and Tower
Alabama Statewide Assistive Technology Advisory Council	Foley Career Center
Alabama State Interagency Transition Team	Guntersville State Park
Alabama State University	Gulf State Park
Alabama Tax Tribunal	Home Medical Equipment Licensure Board
Alabama Transit Coalition	Huntsville Career Center
Alabaster Career Centers	Is Able Center
Anniston Career Center	Jacksonville State University
Auburn University	Jasper Career Center
Birmingham Career Center	Jefferson County Personnel Board

Governor's Office on Disability

Partnerships

VIII. Partnerships (Continued)

Jefferson County Workforce Development	Roanoke Career Center
Joe Wheeler State Park	Sheffield Towne Plaza
Lakeshore Foundation	Shelton State Community College
Lee County Board of Education	Southeast ADA Network Training Team
Limestone County DHR	Sparks Clinic
Mass Care and Sheltering Taskforce	Special Education Advisory Panel
Maxwell Air Force Base	State of Alabama Independent Living Council
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant	State Rehabilitation Council
Mobile Center for Independent Living	Trenholm State
Montevallo University	Troy University, Montgomery and Troy Campuses
Montgomery Career Center	Tuskegee Blind Veterans Group
Montgomery Center for Independent Living	Tuscaloosa Career Center
Montgomery Library for the Blind Advisory Committee	UAB Birmingham
National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils	UAB/Civitan-Sparks Consumer Advisory Council
North Alabama Fair Housing Center	United Ability
Northeast Alabama Community College	United Way of Birmingham
OASIS Advisory Council	University of South Alabama
Oneonta Career Center	UPS of Birmingham
People First	Valley Career Center
Pell City Career Center	Vaughn Park Church of Christ
Phenix City Career Center	World Games, Birmingham



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Join The GOOD List

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